



### Visa information

As a European Union citizen I didn't have to issue a special visa. I entered with my European passport which enabled me to stay\study\work without the need for any permit. The office which issues the Visas in the Erasmus University is not very professional and they asked me for payment even though it clearly said that I'm exempt from all payments. A European passport saves about 200-400 euro in visa permit commission.

### Housing

I chose to stay at the Stadswonen's EIS (Erasmus International House). Stadswonen is an organization that keeps many houses around the city dedicated for students. There are pro's and con's to staying in one of Stadswonen facilities. Bottom line, I would choose a private owned apartment instead of the option I chose, but I would still try to be close to campus or to the International house.

Pro's	Con's
No needs to arrive few days early and find a place to stay while being under pressure. Although there is no problem in finding a decent place in Rotterdam in a short time.	Stadswonen is a horrible organization that charges huge amount for extra's , for example you can be charged 50nis just for getting locked outside of your room, or 250nis for losing the key, plus the customer's service is the most unkind.
No need to take care for electricity\Internet etc. bills, all paid though Stadswonen.	Stadswonen's renting fee is about 100 euro above market price
Many international students including for the exchange program are staying in Stadswonen houses, which makes it easier to bond as well as to do projects together. Also, many of the parties are held there.	The apartments they provide do have furniture, but in a very basic and unpleasant standard.

### Living expenses

Living expenses can vary from person to person according to his life style, these were my expenses:

	Monthly expenses
Accommodations (all included + internet)	600 euro
Food	200 euro
Cell phone	50 euro
Tram	30 euro
Misc, restaurant, bars, clubs	100 euro

<b>Total:</b>	1000 euro
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	<b>Onetime expenses</b>
<b>Flights to and from IL (twice)</b>	600 euro
<b>Vacations (flights trains hotels)</b>	1200 euro
<b>Shopping</b>	200 euro
<b>Total:</b>	2000 euro

## Transportation

Transportation within The Netherlands is very easy; there are direct trains from the Schiphol international airport to about everywhere. A one way ticket to Rotterdam costs about 13euro. Inside Rotterdam people travel by foot, bicycle, tram or metro, depending on the distance, weather and costs. People living in the Erasmus International House (EIS) will find line 21 of the tram the most helpful, it runs frequently between the Rotterdam Central (the main train station) and the International house (tip: you can save a cab on your first visit by taking the 21 tram to “De Esch” and get off at a station called Avenue Concordia). This tram travels through the main attractions of the city, goes near the EIS, and the Erasmus University (it also has two supermarkets and a pharmacy on its route). Tram Travel costs 2.5euro for one hour of travel, or (the cheaper option) 1-2 euro depending on the distance if you travel with a pre-charged card. There is an even cheaper option – getting the card for locals, but it requires a Dutch bank account, filling forms, and waiting few weeks for the card. I chose not to go through the process. Line 7 of the tram also reaches the Erasmus University, but a daily use of the tram can increase costs, I mostly walked from the EIS to the university which takes about 15 minutes. I didn’t find the Rotterdam underground very helpful because it wasn’t in my daily routes, but it is a very good system and you can use the same card that you use for the trams. Actually you can use that card in Amsterdam’s transportation and even in national trains, however, I preferred not to since the card uses a check-in\check-out system, so if you forget to check-out from a tram\train you get the maximum charge which in a tram is only 4 Euros, but in a train can reach 20 Euros.

## Courses

As you know, Tel-Aviv University demands two B’s and not more than one C. this is not an easy task actually, it is very rare to get an A in RSM, so B is actually quite high and the courses are very demanding as far as homework are concerned. I took three courses and I graded them in the following manner from 1-10

Parameter	Strategic Consulting	Marketing of Innovations	International Business Project
<b>Amount of Homework</b>	50 page reading weekly Short task weekly 1 project (60 pages)	4 short business cases (3 pages) 1 long business case (12 pages) 1 project (15 pages) 3 articles reading	1 project (70 pages)

		weekly	
Level of lecturer	9	7	none
Level of guest lectures	10	7	none
Value	9	8	6-8
Summary grade	9	7	7

Several remarks –

1. All courses require a team, although there is a natural tendency to choose the people you already familiar with (i.e. people from the exchange program), I would recommend choosing from the permanent students. The reason is simple, exchange people came to travel and only need a “pass” grade, TAU is almost the only university that requires more than that, this means that you can be taken advantage of.
2. IBP – don’t expect to get companies like Shell, Philips etc. the IBP receives very small, usually unknown companies, this is not necessarily bad, but you have to know that this is what you’re getting into. The group dynamic is very important to the success and the enjoyment from the project. I was lucky to get a pretty interesting project, and a great group of people, but some other participants of the IBP were very unhappy with what they got.
3. Reading the course material is not optional, it’s a must, either because you are asked about it in class, which can cause an embarrassment if you can’t answer, but mostly because it all appears in the exam, and the amount of reading doesn’t allow reading it in the week before the exam. I strongly recommend summarizing it while you read, so that when the exam date arrives, you won’t have so much to read.

## *Recreation*

Rotterdam isn’t the classic tourist gem; however it does offer some nice attractions, nothing secret though, you’ll find them all in the folder that you get on your arrival or in any tourist guide. In my opinion the best attractions are the harbor, the Euromast, café’s and bars on the canals on a sunny day, the parks and traveling along the river by bike all the way to the North Sea. But Rotterdam is located near other places that I think are a must visit (actually it’s not far from almost anywhere in Europe, but I’ll mentioned the closest places): Amsterdam, Den Haag, Keukenhof (huge tulip gardens – open in spring) Cologne (Germany), Bruges and Gant (Belgium). People also recommended Luxemburg, but I haven’t been there myself.

As far as the nightlife, it has a decent nightlife, but nothing that comes close to Amsterdam of course. The downside is that you don’t have too many options, but the upside is that it keeps the exchange students closely integrated and they all go to the same parties together which are lots of fun, if you’re into that sort of fun.

If you can, and not planning on a heavy workload, try to plan your trips outside The Netherlands before your arrival, planning the flights in advance in low cost airlines (such as EasyJet and RyanAir) can decrease costs substantially. Notice that low cost airlines don’t

always use Schiphol airport, sometimes they use very small airports like the one in Eindhoven, so costs and time of travel there should be considered.

### *General experience*

Student exchange experience can vary from one person to another, but in general most people I've talked with (both from Israel and other countries) found it at least a positive if not a 'must' experience. I think it really depends on few factors, like character, workload, maturity, status and expectations. It's really hard to estimate how much it will fit you, but in my opinion, if you really want it, then it will probably fit you.

Personally, with my current understanding, I would have done things differently now, both in choosing the location and the workload. In my past perception, the opportunity to study in the best business schools in Europe, meant that I should be taking the full workload possible and choose the school also according to its prestige. I now find both less relevant. I would now give more emphasis on location of the school (for example, prefer Amsterdam over Rotterdam, even though it's a university with much less prestige) and I would defiantly have taken less workload, as I wasn't too impressed with the level of studies. Take this opportunity to travel and party and much as you can, the studies themselves should be in lower priority. (I was also working 40% of the time for the company in Israel, so for sure you'll have more available time than I did).

### *Tips & important things to be aware of*

1. You will need about 2x20kg suitcases to carry all the winter clothes, be sure that you book flights that give you the option to have 2 suitcases (not all of them do). In case you have to send stuff home to Israel, prices are not that high if you use TNT parcel service; which costs about 120euro for 20kg package.
2. Try to organize a group and buy a printer and an iron together, it saves a lot of time and troubles and you don't need it all the time.
3. I'm not sure, but it might be helpful to have a Dutch bank account, if it's not so problematic to open one. All the automated printers and copiers on campus uses the bank cards and those who don't have it simply can't print or copy.
4. If you're contemplating about the integration trip – don't, it's both important and fun.
5. If you're planning on having visitors and you have an inflatable mattress, bring it with you.

If you're interested in more detailed explanation for any of the sections that were mentioned, please fill free to write to:

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Wishing you an excellent exchange semester!